

Morristown

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Morristown Muster

January 2017 Newsletter

Greetings!

Thank you for subscribing to Morristown National Historical Park's e-newsletter. We are pleased to keep you connected to your national park.

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Vanessa Smiley Selected for Chief of Interpretation of the Southern Campaign Group of the Revolutionary War

Vanessa Smiley, the park's current Chief of Interpretation, has been selected as the new Chief of Interpretation for the Southern Campaign Group of the Revolutionary War. In her new position, Smiley will supervise and manage the visitor services operations at [Cowpens National Battlefield](#), [Kings Mountain National Military Park](#), [Ninety Six National Historic Site](#), and [Overmountain Victory Trail National](#)

In an email to park staff, Smiley said "This is bittersweet for me since I had expected to spend more time at Morristown... But for personal reasons, it became clear that I needed to be closer to my family than New Jersey allowed. I am sad to be leaving but excited at the next opportunity that awaits me..."

Smiley joined Morristown in August of 2014 and has 11+ years with the National Park Service. Her previous parks include Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway sites of Clara Barton National Historic Site, Great Falls Park, and Glen Echo Park.

"I think I can speak for the park in expressing our sincere gratitude for all of her hard work and accomplishments over the past two and a half years. We wish her well in her new assignment and adventure as she tackles the Rev War's Southern Campaign!" said Park Superintendent Tom Ross.

Smiley's anticipated start date is early February and she will be working with park management to ensure a smooth transition in the coming weeks.

Change to Winter Hours of Operation

Beginning on January 1, 2017, the Jockey Hollow Visitor Center building will be closed. The building will reopen on Saturday, February 11, 2017.*



During that same period, the Washington's Headquarters Museum & the Ford Mansion will only be open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Please note that the grounds of the entire park will remain open 7 days per week along with the restroom facilities at the Jockey Hollow area, per park hours listed at www.nps.gov/morr.

**These closures will NOT affect scheduled education/school programs.*

Reminder: Washington's Headquarters Museum, Ford Mansion, and Jockey Hollow Visitor Center are CLOSED on January 1, 2017

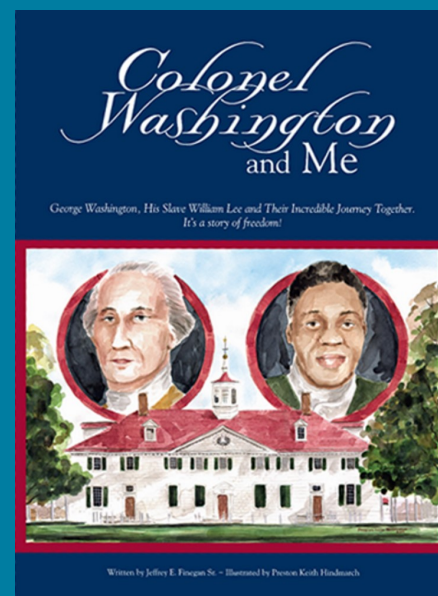
We want to remind our park patrons that the park's main visitor services at the Washington's Headquarters Museum, the Ford Mansion, and the Jockey Hollow Visitor Center are closed on December 25, 2016 (Christmas Day) and January 1, 2017 (New Year's Day).

The restrooms located at the Jockey Hollow Visitor Center and the New York Brigade will be OPEN. Patrons are still welcome to walk, hike, or bike the grounds where allowed and all roads will be open.

Have a great and safe holiday season!

Author Jeff Finegan Joins Us in February to Discuss His Book *Colonel Washington and Me*

In 1768 George Washington purchases a young man who had been born into slavery. Washington has been a slave owner since age eleven. What develops is one of the more extraordinary relationships in American history. While most biographies on the first president mention the bond between George Washington and William Lee, *Colonel Washington and Me* is the first book dedicated solely to this story. The young reader travels through history as both men search for freedom on their incredible journey together.



In honor of both Black History Month and President's Day, this program will take place on Sunday, February 19th, 2017 at 2:00 pm at the Washington's Headquarters Museum Auditorium. Please visit our [website](#) for the most up to date information.

The Last Days of Colonel Jacob Ford, Jr.

By: Eric Olsen, Park Ranger/Historian

December 1776 was one of the lowest points of the American Revolution for the Patriot forces. General Washington and his small army had been driven out of New Jersey into Pennsylvania. Four days earlier on Friday the 13th, General Charles Lee had been captured by a British cavalry patrol in a tavern in Basking Ridge. Most of the New Jersey militia had disbanded and fled in the face of the British invasion. The only Patriot force of any note left in the state were militia from Morris, Essex, and Sussex counties under the command of Colonel Jacob Ford, Jr.



The British army controlled New Jersey's central core running from Elizabeth and Newark through New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, to Burlington. Unaware of what Patriot forces might linger on their flanks, the British sent troops into northern New Jersey to investigate.

On the evening of December 17th, 800 to 1,000 British soldiers ran into Ford's militia near Springfield, New Jersey. Fighting continued until darkness caused both sides to withdraw. Colonel Ford and his men retreated to Chatham where he wrote to Major General William Heath:

"We have Since Sun Set had a Brush with the Enemy 4 Miles below this, in which we have Suffered, and our Militia much Disheartened. They are all Retreated to this place and will in all probability be Attacked by Day Break. The Enemy we have Reasons to believe are Double our Numbers... If in your wisdom you can Assist us we may possibly Beat them yet, but without your aide we can't Stand."

Fortunately for Colonel Ford, the British had no intention to continue the fight and

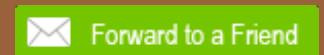
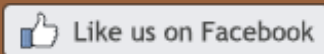
withdrew to Elizabeth. Colonel Ford and the Morris militia returned to Morristown.

On January 4, 1777, the day after the Patriot victory at Princeton, Ford was ordered to move his men further east to Chatham. But while he was at the head of his regiment, *"he was struck all at once with a Pleurisy and delirium, he was lifted from his horse and borne off the field as the March began."* His regiment continued on as ordered but a small guard and the regimental surgeon Doctor Timothy Johnes, Jr. [Ford's brother-in-law] remained behind to care for the colonel at the Ford Mansion.

Two days later, General Washington and his army arrived in Morristown with the intention of spending the winter in local homes. General Washington made his headquarters at Arnold's Tavern on Morristown Green, while one mile away the Ford Mansion had its own guests. Captain Thomas Rodney of Delaware wrote: *"Our whole Light Infantry are quartered in a very large house belonging to Col. Ford having 4 rooms on a floor and two stories high."* While Ford suffered upstairs, much of his house was now the quarters of over 40 soldiers who didn't always make the best house guests. Gabriel Ford recalled that some of the officers: *"were sons of some of the leading men of that state - gentlemen by birth, but rowdies in practice. They injured the room very much by their nightly carousals."*

Finally on January 10, 1777, Jacob Ford, Jr. succumbed to his illness and died of pneumonia. In a gesture to Ford and the New Jersey militia, General Washington ordered the Light Infantry troops, who occupied the Ford Mansion, to bury Colonel Ford with "the honors of war." Forty soldiers along with fifes and drums escorted the mourning party to the Presbyterian Church by Morristown Green where Colonel Ford's grave can still be seen today.

Stay Connected



Feel free to contact us with any questions regarding the park or our ranger programs. We can be reached at 973-539-2016 ext.210 during regular business hours or you can email us at morr_interpretation@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Morristown National Historical Park | 973-539-2016 ext.210
morr_interpretation@nps.gov | <http://www.nps.gov/morr>
30 Washington Place
Morristown, NJ 07960